



More than 200 people, including state and local officials, attended last weekend's official opening of the new Ashdod Fire Station on Franklin Street.

Town Celebrates Ashdod Reopening

By PAULA MAXWELL

Even the sun cooperated last Saturday as over 200 people turned out for ribbon cutting ceremonies for the newly constructed Ashdod Fire Station on Franklin Street.

Fire Chief Bill Harriman said he was proud and grateful crediting the many volunteers, including the Ashdod reopening team whom he said provided the momentum to make the vision of a new station to serve northwest Duxbury a reality.

"This was a grassroots effort from the start," he said. "I've got many people to thank."

Harriman spoke of the numerous donations and services provided to keep the costs down, including those of former Selectman Abdul Hamadeh whose architectural firm ASEC Corp. in Quincy, provided the design work. Also mentioned were residents Paul Brogna who designed the septic system and Kevin Sealund who offered to do the site work on a pro bono basis. He also thanked the building contractor M.H.D. Contractors in Yarmouth and the many subcontractors.

Harriman said he was overwhelmed by the generosity of so many people who wanted to be part of the day including Mark Trask, a firefighter from out of town who donated the flag, and local bakery owners Tim and Paula Barry who said they wanted to donate the sheet cake for the occasion.

Besides state and town officials, many in the audience were from local neighborhoods. Some walked to the festivities and all applauded the ribbon cutting.

Harriman made special presentations to many throughout the ceremony including resident Barbara Ripley, Ashdod Reopening Team Chairman, whom he credited as the driving force behind the commit-

tee effort which led to town meeting approval of the project.

Neighborhood resident Kathy Kazanowski was also recognized as a grassroots force in the reopening process.

Harriman traced the intermittent operational history of Ashdod and recalled the dark day in 1989 when he was told that fiscal constraints would force him to cut 25 percent of his budget and close Ashdod station.

"I pray to God we never have to compromise our public safety again," he said.

Selectmen and other town officials joined with House Speaker Fran Marini and State Senator Robert Hedlund in offering official recognition presenting plaques and certificates to selected individuals including Chief Harriman.

Among the crowd were former fire chiefs Howie Blanchard, Carl O'Neil and Ken Erickson.

Msgr. William Glynn offered a blessing and the police color guard assisted as the youngest and oldest firefighters in the department raised the flag.

Selectmen Chairman Margaret Kearney assisted by Barbara Ripley, cut the ribbon on the new station and the doors were officially raised. Crowds toured the facilities and enjoyed refreshments, including pizza.

Ripley called the opening, "A great day for public safety in Duxbury" and noted that she has come to know a great group of individuals in the department. "If I ever have an emergency, I'm glad it's a Duxbury firefighter who will answer that call," she said.

The Ashdod station was originally opened in 1968 and had a sporadic history highlighted by lack of coverage and actually closing in 1990 due to budget cuts.

Five years ago, neighbors and officials raised concerns over response times which were

running 10 to 12 minutes to some parts of town from the single central fire station. The new station will result in firefighters having the ability to reach 57 percent of homes in town within four minutes an increase from the 35 percent indicated in a 1997 public safety study committee report.

The new handicapped accessible station has vehicle bays, which will house an engine and an ambulance. The station will continue to accommodate Jordan Hospital paramedics and its transport vehicle. An office is provided for their use and will double as the chief's second office.

There is a reception area and restrooms, and upstairs a recreation area, and fully equipped kitchen. Above that are several upstairs bedrooms, two of which will be available to the two fulltime firefighters on duty around the clock and two others for the paramedics.

Town Manager Rocco Longo told the crowd, "This project is an exemplary model of the democratic process. It started with neighborhood concern about fire service and through teamwork, consensus and cooperation the project was successfully executed."

Harriman said that within two weeks the station will be fully operational.